

# Soseki Natsume in the UK

## 150 years anniversary of Soseki's birth

Location: Gustave Tuck LT at UCL (lecture) and North Cloister at UCL (reception)

Starts and Ends: 25/07/2017 16:00-1930

Location: University College London (UCL), Gower Street WC1E 6BT

Registration: The event is free of charge but prior registration is required via the following Eventbrite site.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/natsume-soseki-versus-william-shakespeare-an-open-lecture-tickets-35924066851?aff=es2>



### **"Natsume Soseki versus William Shakespeare: Two Heavyweights of World Literature"**

## Programme

16:00-17:30 Soseki Public Lecture

"Natsume Soseki versus William Shakespeare: Two Heavyweights of World Literature"

Speaker: Damian Flanagan

Venue: the Gustave Tuck LT, 2nd Floor, South Junction, Wilkins Building, Gower Street WC1E 6BT

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/maps/gustave-tuck-lt>

18:00-20:00 Reception

Venue: North Cloister, Wilkins Building, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/maps/north-cloisters>

Presentation: "Soseki and Matsuyama" by students from Matsuyama Higashi High School

Library exhibition on Japan-UCL interaction

Herb tea demonstration

## Content

This year is the 150 year anniversary of the birth of Soseki Natsume, one of the most outstanding Japanese novelists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Soseki studied at University College London (UCL) from 1900 to 1902 after teaching English at the Matsuyama Junior High School (currently Matsuyama Higashi High School) and the Fifth High School (currently Kumamoto University). After returning to Japan, he worked in Tokyo University and started his life as novelist based on his experiences in the U.K. As a consequence of his time in the UK, his work became influenced by Shakespeare and a range of contemporary British novelists. Soseki may be not as famous as Yasunari Kawabata and Yukio Mishima, but he is very influential in Japan. In fact, as most Japanese students are exposed to his work including *Kokoro* in high school, his stories are regarded as culturally iconic and common sense for Japanese people, much like Shakespeare in the U.K. Even, Haruki Murakami, who is thought of as a possible future winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, admits that Soseki is his most favourite Japanese novelist. Soseki's face was on the 1000 yen note for achievements during his lifetime.

This July, we have organised the third UCL-Japan Youth Challenge. This is a special summer school for British and Japanese High School/Sixth Form students. This year's theme is "Soseki in the UK." To celebrate this anniversary, we have invited four students and a teacher from the Matsuyama Higashi High School, the setting of his famous novel *Botchan*. As part of "Soseki in the UK", we will run a special lecture "Natsume Soseki versus William Shakespeare: Two Heavyweights of World Literature" by Damian Flanagan, an expert on Soseki. In respect to this, the Iwanami Shoten, Publishing House, which published Soseki's books from the beginning, will donate a complete set of Soseki's works to the UCL library.

### A special lecture by Damian Flanagan

Damian Flanagan will present a special lecture about Soseki Natsume through a

British perspective. Damian Flanagan is an award-winning author and an expert on the works of Soseki, he has authored two books on Soseki: *The Natsume Soseki the Japanese Don't Know* and *Natsume Soseki: Superstar of World Literature*, and also translated *The Tower of London: Tales of Victorian London* which Soseki wrote based on the experience in London. He won a prestigious Japan-US Friendship Commission Prize for the Translation of Japanese Literature for this translation.



## Soseki Reception

A formal reception will follow the lecture, attended by Iwanami Shoten, Publishing House and the Japanese Embassy. At this reception, we will observe a ceremony, in which Iwanami Shoten, Publishers donate their gift, *Soseki Zenshu* (comprising all the books of Soseki's novels), to UCL, a presentation by the students from Matsuyama Higashi High School and a herb tea demonstration.

Cosponsored by

CLAIR, Embassy of Japan in the UK, Japan Foundation, Iwanami Shoten, Publishers, Matsuyama city, Matsuyama Higashi High School, UCL, UCL-Japan Youth Challenge Committee, UK Japan Institute



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Japan  
in the UK



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## Enquiries

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\*Organizer Name: UCL-Japan Youth Challenge Committee

### \*Organizer Description

We will organise a UCL-Japan Youth Challenge. This is a special summer school for British and Japanese High School/Sixth Form students. Every year, about 100 students participate. We started this summer school in 2015 as to commemorate 150 years celebration of the Choshu-five and Satsuma-19, who came to study at UCL and, after returning, contributed significantly to the establishment of modern Japan. Among their members was the first Prime Minister, Hirobumi Ito, the first Foreign Minister, Kaoru Inoue, and the first Education Minister Arinori Mori. We plan to have this opportunity to run workshops, lectures and presentations and aim to facilitate cross cultural understanding and academic development. In particular, our aims are as follows:

- Be interested in global and social issues To facilitate a cross cultural understanding of Anglo-Japanese global and social issues.
- To Experience lectures at one of the best universities in the world
- To explore the idea of developing a future career at one of the best universities in the world. Think about the future career to study at the top universities
- Use English as communication tool To develop the use of English as a global communication tool
- Learn Japanese (for UK students) To study Japanese (for UK students)
- International exchange with students in the UK and Japan To facilitate international exchanges and cross cultural communication between students in the UK and Japan
- To engage with students to develop an autonomous, enterprising and challenging mind. Autonomy, enterprise, and challenging mind